

ANZSPM Member eNews – 3 April 2020

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COVID-19 updates

Australian COVID-19 Palliative Care Working Group (ACPCWG)

ANZSPM continues to work with the ACPCWG on supporting the palliative care response to COVID-19. The ACPCWG is a partnership between Palliative Care Australia (PCA), the Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine (ANZSPM), Palliative Care Nurses Australia (PCNA), the Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine (AChPM) of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and the End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) program.

ACPCWG-related updates and resources are below:

- ACPCWG statement on: COVID19 - why palliative care matters (2 April 2020)
- PCA statement regarding formation of the group and coronavirus COVID-19 (March 2020)
- [Integrating palliative care into COVID-19 planning](#): Authors Dr Will Cairns and Prof Meera Agar *MJA InsightPlus 23.03.2020*
- [Planning for the dark side of the pandemic](#): Interview with Professor Meera Agar, *Australian Financial Review 27.03.2020*

ANZSPM COVID19 Special Interest Group (COVID19 SIG)

ANZSPM had overwhelming interest from members to join a COVID-19 Special Interest Group. The COVID19 SIG met for the first time on Monday 30 March 2020, with Michael Chapman as SIG Chair. As a group, the SIG has identified the following initial priority areas which are now being progressed by sub-groups within the SIG:

1. **Palliative approach for non-specialists (led by Kelly Li)**
2. **Role of palliative care in screening and triage of cases transitioning between settings (led by Michael Chapman)**
3. **“Compromised care” (best possible care) approach, including telehealth and spatial distancing considerations (led by Beth Russell)**
4. **Access and alternative routes of medication (led by Wei Lee)**
5. **Death in the community / bereavement support (led by Umbreen Qasi)**

Members have been invited to share relevant local resources that may assist the SIG to coordinate high-level guidance on COVID-19 more quickly, by emailing **the ANZSPM office**: info@anzspm.org.au (indicating in the subject line which of the five priority areas the resource is relevant to).

NZ Taskforce on COVID-19



Through ANZSPM's existing collaboration with the key palliative care peak bodies in NZ, a taskforce on COVID-19 has been rapidly put in place. The taskforce continues to work on developing a range of resources to support all clinicians during the COVID-19 situation. Hospice NZ is hosting on its website resources for both public and health professional information. The webpage for health care professionals can be found [here](#). ANZSPM's Aotearoa Committee is providing regular updates shared with NZ members on the work of the collaboration.

ANZSPM COVID-19 resources page



ANZSPM has collated national and international resources to support members and other health care professionals in providing palliative care in the challenging environment presented by COVID19. This list is being updated regularly. To access, please [click here](#).

Update: ANZSPM events and COVID19

ANZSPM continues to monitor government advice on COVID19 and consider how our events may be impacted. Conference 2020 program planning continues while we also explore options for a virtual conference format. A decision will be made at a later stage and all members provided with updated information. We expect to open registrations for the conference a little later than usual while we continue to monitor the evolving situation.

We are currently exploring options for virtual Trainee Study meetings and/or online training so that Trainee Members will have access to suitable training opportunities during the year despite the impact on our usual face-to-face approaches. We will provide further updates on this directly to Trainee Members and in our closed Trainee Facebook Group (Trainee Members can arrange to join this group by emailing info@anzspm.org.au).

As previously advised, all ANZSPM staff are now working from home following government advice. We will continue to provide our regular administrative support, potentially with some more flexible hours in the interim period and the office phone will divert to our info@anzspm.org.au email address so please leave a message and we will endeavour to get back to you as quickly as possible. We appreciate members' understanding over this period.

Government News

AUS: Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for the health and aged care sector

The Australian Department of Health regularly provides up-to-date and authoritative information and advice on COVID-19 for the health and aged care sector [here](#).

NZ: Health advice and latest updates on COVID-19

The Ministry of Health in New Zealand provides regular updates, information and health advice on COVID-19 on its website [here](#).

AUS: Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety extends deadline for submissions

The deadline for submissions to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has been extended by two months to **30 June 2020**. The Commissioners have also suspended all hearings,

workshops and group consultations of the Royal Commission for the time being, subject to ongoing review. The Commissioners recognise that meaningful engagement with the aged care sector during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is not possible and have therefore allowed more time for their involvement in the inquiry. For more information, please [click here](#).

QLD: Reports of inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying

The Queensland Parliamentary Committee inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying published two reports, one on aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and a second report on voluntary assisted dying. ANZSPM made a submission to the inquiry and notes the first report's focus on access to high-quality, people-centred palliative care at home, in hospital or an aged care residential facility. In its second report, the Committee has recommended implementation of a scheme for voluntary assisted dying. ANZSPM is reviewing both reports in detail, while awaiting the government's response to the Committee's recommendations. For more information please visit ANZSPM's website [here](#).

Related SMH article: [Committee recommends Queensland legalise voluntary assisted dying \(31 March 2020\)](#)

AUS: Senate inquiry report into patient access to medicinal cannabis in Australia

On 25 March 2020, the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs tabled its report of the inquiry into the current barriers to patient access to medicinal cannabis in Australia. ANZSPM made a submission to the inquiry. The report makes 20 recommendations which include allocating funds to relevant medical colleges and peak bodies to support the development and delivery of accredited face-to-face and online training programs on medicinal cannabis for medical practitioners. For more information [click here](#).

Department of Health consultation on telehealth related MBS items

ANZSPM engaged with both PCA and RACP in regard to submissions to a Department of Health consultation on additional MBS specialist services which may be appropriate to expand to phone and/or telehealth as part of the ongoing work to support Australians impacted by COVID-19. The current list of COVID-19 is published on the factsheets page of the MBS online website.

AUS: Palliative Care Prognostic Tools Survey still open!

The Department of Health's National Palliative Care Strategy 2018 prioritises the need for early planning and referral to palliative care for people affected by life-limiting illnesses. The key to implementation, is identifying when someone would benefit from palliative care and knowing how to assist them. To do this, many health professionals use prognostic (predictive) tools to identify when someone is at risk of dying within 12 months. This survey aims to determine:

- the tools used by healthcare workers to identify patients nearing the end of life
- the extent to which these tools are used within different settings
- the facilitators and barriers for using the tools.

To complete the survey please [click here](#). The survey closes at 5pm on **Friday 17 April 2020**.

Other News and updates

AMA COVID 19 advocacy priorities for doctors in training

The Federal AMA Council of Doctors in Training (CDT) has developed an information sheet on its advocacy priorities to support doctors in training as the health system responds to the COVID-19 virus. More information can be found [here](#).

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): CPD requirements during COVID19 pandemic

The RACP has advised the following regarding CPD obligations and requirements during COVID19:

Aotearoa New Zealand Fellows

The Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) decided to exempt all general and vocationally registered doctors from recertification programme requirements until 28 February 2021. MCNZ staff will not be auditing doctors for compliance with CPD over the coming 11 months, but they do expect doctors to be enrolled and actively participating in their required programmes from 1 March 2021. The RACP is very supportive of this approach.

Australian Fellows

2019 requirements

Fellows with incomplete 2019 CPD records will have automatic extensions until midnight (AWST) Friday 31 July 2020. There's no fee for this extension. The situation is being monitored closely to determine if further extensions are necessary.

2020 requirements

The RACP is currently seeking clarification from the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) on CPD requirements for medical practitioners and will update members as soon as possible.

For more information, please visit RACP's website or contact the RACP directly at MyCPD@racp.edu.au or MyCPD@racp.org.nz.

Upcoming ANZSPM Events



ANZSPM Conference 2020, 17-20 September 2020 | Auckland, NZ

The conference theme for 2020 is *Palliative Care in an Uncertain World*. Please visit the website for updates: www.anzspm.org.au/anzspm20.

Upcoming Events

Please note: In light of the evolving situation around the current COVID-19 pandemic, many events previously promoted in our eNews may have been postponed, cancelled or moved to a virtual format. ANZSPM strongly advises members to check this with the event organiser directly. In our last eNews we notified members of a number of cancellations and postponements. As new dates and information become available, we will share details here.

National Palliative Care Week, 24 – 30 May 2020

National Palliative Care Week is an annual event organised by Palliative Care Australia and supported by the Department of Health to raise awareness and understanding about palliative care in the Australian community. PCA has announced that they are looking at creative ways to interact with audiences during the week without holding physical events. PCA will provide updates via their eNews and website.

The International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG) 2020 Annual Conference | 1-3 October 2020 | Geneva, Switzerland

For more information please visit: <https://siog.org/content/siog-2020-annual-conference-0>

EUROPALL2020: European Conference on Controversies in Palliative Care | 29-30 Oct 2020 | Munich, Germany More information is at <https://europall2020.com>

Palliative Care Nurses Australia Conference | 22-23 Nov 2020 | Pullman Albert Park, Melbourne VIC
More information at <https://www.pcna2020.org/>

Careers

For the latest positions advertised on the ANZSPM website – visit the ANZSPM Careers pages for details!

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Our standard office hours: Mon-Thurs 9.15am-2.45pm AEST

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